



Fireplace Safety FAQs

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Review a few of the basic questions customers might have about their indoor fireplaces.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: Approximately 5 minutes for the PDF. Use the Additional Discussion section to spend more time on this topic.

HOW TO USE: The lesson includes a PDF which you can use similar to the way you would use a PowerPoint presentation. The trainer's notes will offer notes for each slide, but you may elaborate on each as much as you wish. These are only a few of the questions customers might ask when they're thinking of purchasing an indoor fireplace.

Slide 1 - Introduction

Customers purchasing an indoor fireplace may have questions about how to safely operate it. Also be aware of those who may have recently purchased a new home with a fireplace. They may be coming into our store to buy fireplace accessories. This is a good time to remind them of fireplace safety, especially as the winter months approach.

Slide 2 - How much space should I leave around the stove?

You should have at least 36 inches, or 3 feet, clearance on all sides of the stove to prevent scorching or possible fire. Keep away flammable items such as furniture, books and newspaper.

Slide 3 - How often should I clean the chimney?

It's best to clean them once a year, but inspect them twice a month to make sure they're still safe. They should be free of obstructions and creosote. This task should be performed by a professional chimney sweep. If you have a metal chimney, there's a simple test to tell if it's clean. A clean metal chimney will "ping" when struck with a metal object. A dirty chimney will make a dull thud.

Slide 4 - What is creosote?

Creosote is formed when the smoke and gas from burning solid fuels condense on a chimney. It creates a black, crusty build-up and is a fire hazard and reduces the efficiency of the chimney.

Slide 5 - What are the features of the best type of glass enclosure?

The best glass enclosures for the fireplace will have a safety lock to ensure the doors will not open accidentally. They might also have removable doors for easy cleaning and a permanently attached curtain screen. If you get one with outside side-pull handles, you will eliminate reaching into the heat of the fire to close the doors.

Slide 6 - When is it safe to close the damper?

If you have a manual damper on the chimney, then make sure it is in proper working condition. You can close the damper when you are not using the fireplace to prevent warm air from escaping. However, always open the damper before lighting a fire. Keep the damper open until the ashes are cool. If you close the damper while the ashes are still warm, there is still a chance for poisonous gasses to build up in the home.

Slide 7 - Can I burn any wood in my fireplace?

Only burn dry cured firewood in your fireplace. The best wood is that which has been dried for 8 to 12 months. Do not burn crates, construction scraps or treated wood. Some of these woods have chemicals in them which can be harmful to your health. Never use charcoal in a fireplace.

Slide 8 - Do I need a carbon monoxide detector for a fireplace?

Yes, for your safety, it's best to install a carbon monoxide detector. Place it in the hallway near the bedroom, and put one on every level of the home. Also make sure you have smoke detectors installed in your home and have a fire extinguisher stored somewhere near the fireplace in case of emergency.



Slide 9 - Closing comments

These are a few of the questions customers might ask about indoor fireplaces. Remember, it's important to learn as much as you can about all of the products in the heating category so customers will continue to shop our store. Always attend vendor presentations, when possible, to learn more about the specific products we sell.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- Review the types of fireplaces you sell. What is the basic information employees need to know to sell these products?
- Have employees share other questions customers may ask about fireplaces.
- Talk about the accessories and add-on sales employees can suggest to a customer who owns or is buying a fireplace.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING: Take NRHA's Basic Training Course in Hardware Retailing to learn more about the Heating and Cooling department.